

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 DRC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 752

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7174

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS PINT, PFOR, KS, JA

SUBJECT: KIM TAE-CHUNG SURFACES

1. KIM TAE-CHUNG HELD SURPRISE PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY (OCT 26) AT 1000 HOURS. FIRST WORK OF PRESS CONFERENCE BEGAN CIRCULATING SHORTLY AFTER 0800 HOURS. GOVERNMENT ALSO LET IT BE KNOWN THAT KIM'S HOUSE ARREST HAD BEEN LIFTED AS OF 0800 HOURS. PRESS CONFERENCE WAS HELD IN ROOM AT KIM'S HOME WITH LARGE NUMBER OF HASTILY ASSEMBLED NEWSMEN PRESENT. KIM APPEARED TIRED BUT IN APPARENTLY FAIR HEALTH.

2. KIM OPENED PRESS CONFERENCE WITH BRIEF WRITTEN STATEMENT IN WHICH HE:

A. EXPRESSED HIS GRATITUDE FOR KOREAN PEOPLE'S CONCERN OVER HIS WELFARE,

B. INDICATED WISH TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WHATEVER HARM MAY HAVE BEEN CAUSED TO THE NATION BY HIS OVERSEAS ACTIVITIES, THAT WAS NOT HIS INTENTION,

C. SAID THAT, NO MATTER WHAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE "INCIDENT", HE WAS HAPPY TO HAVE RETURNED

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SAFELY TO HIS HOMELAND,

D. EXPRESSED HOPE THAT NO DAMAGE WILL BE DONE TO RELATIONS BETWEEN KGAEA AND JAPAN BECAUSE OF HIMSELF.

3. FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY OF MAJOR POINTS MADE BY KIM ORALLY AND IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS FROM NEWSMEN:

A. SINCE HIS ARRIVAL IN SEOUL KIM HAD NOT BEEN PERMITTED BY INVESTIGATIVE AUTHORITIES TO HAVE CONTACTS. HE ACCEPTED THIS RESTRICTION, BUT FROM TODAY NEED FOR SUCH RESTRICTION NO LONGER EXISTS. HE WISHED TO REPEAT HIS THANKS TO THOSE IN KOREA AND OVERSEAS WHO HAVE BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT HIM.

B. AT SOME LENGTH, KIM DENIED CHARGES MADE IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY THAT, WHILE ABROAD HE CALLED FOR WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. FORCES, FORMATION OF GOVERNMENT IN EXILE, SUSPENSION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE, AND SUPPORT FOR KIM IL-SONG CONFEDERATION SCHEME. SAID HE WANTED TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT HE NEVER MADE SUCH PROPOSALS, AND ON THE CONTRARY, OPPOSED SUCH VIEWS WHENEVER HE ENCOUNTERED THEM.

C. NOTED THAT THERE WERE STRAINS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KOREA AND JAPAN BECAUSE OF HIM AND HE FELT THAT THE KOREA-JAPAN RELATIONSHIP SHOULD NOT BE DAMAGED. INDICATED THAT WAS REASON FOR HAVING PRESS CONFERENCE.

D. SAID HIS HEALTH IS NOT GOOD AT THIS TIME AND HE INTENDED TO DEVOTE HIMSELF TO REGAINING HIS HEALTH. SAID HE DID NOT INTEND TO ENGAGE IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT PRESENT TIME AND SAID HE HAD NO PLANS FOR TRAVELING ABROAD. IN ANSWER TO QUESTION RE STATE AT HARVARD, KIM GAVE VAGUE ANSWER TO GENERAL EFFECT THAT HE HAD BEEN OUT OF TOUCH SINCE HIS ABDUCTION AND THAT WOULD HAVE TO MAKE SOME CONTACTS REGARDING THAT MATTER. KIM ALSO INDICATED HE DID NOT EXPECT TO GO TO JAPAN.

E. IN ANSWER TO QUESTION OF WHETHER HE WOULD SEE JAPANESE LDP POLITICIAN UTSUNOMIYA, KIM SAID HE HAD NO PLANS TO SEE ANYONE OR TO ENGAGE IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. LATER REITERATED HE HAD NO PLAN TO ENGAGE IN ANY ACTIVITY IN ANSWER TO ANOTHER QUESTION OF WHETHER HE

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WOULD ACCEPT INVITATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN OFFICIAL OR UNOFFICIAL GATHERINGS.

F. WHEN QUERIED ON IDENTIFICATION OF HIS ABDUCTORS, KIM REPLIED IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN DONE BY PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS, BUT HE HIMSELF DID NOT KNOW THE IDENTITY OF THE ORGANIZATION WHICH KIDNAPPED HIM. AS FOR KIM TONG-UN, KIM TAE-CHUNG SAID THAT AS HE STEPPED OUT OF THE ROOM HE WAS BEATEN AND ANESTHETIZED, AND

WOULD ONLY RECOGNIZE ONE OF HIS ABDUCTORS. THAT ONE PERSON WAS NOT KIM TONG-UN. ASKED IF INVESTIGATION OF HIS CASE WAS CONCLUDED OR JUST SUSPENDED, KIM SAID HE DID NOT KNOW, THAT HE HAD GIVEN EVIDENCE SOME THIRTEEN TIMES BUT RECENTLY HE HAD NOT BEEN QUESTIONED.

4. BEFORE KIM'S PRESS CONFERENCE RADIO REPORTED THAT MRS. KIM HAD TALKED TO NEWSMEN INDICATING HER HUSBAND REPEATEDLY CONVEYED TO AUTHORITIES HIS DESIRE TO GO TO U.S. MRS. KIM QUOTED AS INDICATING AUTHORITIES SAID THEY WOULD DO THEIR BEST TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO GO. SHE ALSO EXPRESSED BELIEF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR KIM TO LEAVE "SOONER OR LATER".

COMMENT:

5. WE HAD NO ADVANCE WARNING OF GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO ALLOW KIM TO SURFACE AT THIS TIME. AT THIS POINT, IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW MUCH FREEDOM HE IS TO BE ALLOWED, DESPITE LIFTING OF HOUSE ARREST. BASED ON HIS PRESS CONFERENCE COMMENTS, KIM IS NOT EXPECTING TO ENGAGE IN ANY OVERT POLITICAL ACTIVITIES EVEN IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT HE IS PERMITTED TO DO SO.

6. AT THIS POINT ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT'S MOTIVATIONS IN ALLOWING KIM PRESS CONFERENCE MUST BE SPECULATIVE. HOWEVER, ANNOUNCING OF LIFTING OF HOUSE ARREST AND PRESS CONFERENCE DO SERVE IMMEDIATE GOVERNMENT PURPOSES. FIRST OF ALL, IT MAY BE DESIGNED TO PUT ROKG IN BETTER TACTICAL POSITION AS IT MOVES TOWARD SOME COMPROMISE SETTLEMENT OF ISSUE WITH GOJ. (IN PAST WEEK THERE HAVE BEEN INTENSIFIED EFFORTS AT OFFICIAL LEVEL, AS WELL AS THROUGH INFORMAL TANAKA INTERMEDIARY, TO WRAP UP CASE IN NEAR FUTURE.)
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SECONDLY, WHATEVER THE REALITIES OF KIM'S PERSONAL SITUATION, KIM PRESS CONFERENCE AND GOVERNMENT LIFTING OF HOUSE ARREST DO SERVE TO DIVERT PUBLIC AND STUDENT ATTENTION FROM ALLEGED SUICIDE OF PROF. CHOE CHONG-KIL (SEOUL 7137). INEVITABLE, STORIES THAT CHOE DIED UNDER ROK CIA TORTURE ARE WIDELY CIRCULATING, AND GIVEN ROK CIA'S REPUTATION AND PAST PERFORMANCE, THEY ARE BELIEVED.

7. MORE GENERALLY GOVERNMENT MAY ALSO HOPE THAT SURFACING OF KIM IN THIS FASHION WILL IMPROVE ITS INTERNATIONAL IMAGE.

8. SO FAR, WE HAVE RECEIVED NO SIGNAL FROM GOVERNMENT THAT KIM WILL BE PERMITTED TO GO TO

U.S., NOR HAVE WE BEEN APPROACHED BY ANYONE ON
BEHALF OF KIM HIMSELF. WE DOUBT THAT HE WILL,
IN FACT, BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE COUNTRY IN NEAR
FUTURE. HOWEVER, IN EVENT WE ARE APPROACHED FOR
VISA FOR KIM, IT WILL BE ISSUED IMMEDIATELY ON
REQUEST.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SEOUL07174
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS HABIB
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973109/aaaaagfu.tel
Line Count: 176
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 NOV 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20-Nov-2001 by elyme>; APPROVED <18-Dec-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KIM TAE-CHUNG SURFACES
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, KS, JA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005